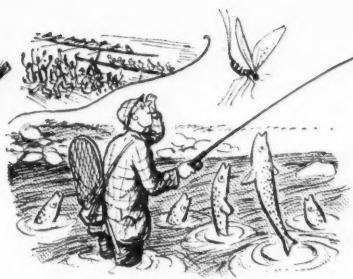




PUNCHY

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CXCVI, No. 5,117

May 10 1939

Charivaria

"THE periods of national tension, noticed particularly at week-ends, may perhaps be over for the time being," says a publicist. No more football-pools until the autumn.

This recalls the fact that hundreds of motorists have written to Sir JOHN SIMON protesting against the increased burden. We understand that most of the letters began, "Dearer Sir, —"

• • •
An actress complains that reporters knock at her door at all hours of the day and night. They should use the bell marked PRESS.



• • •
"APRIL, 1939

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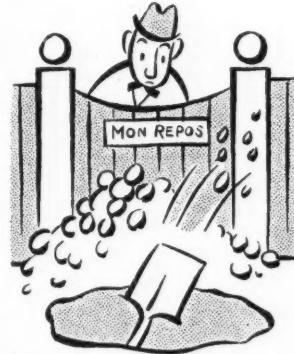
FRIDAY

What can ye expect frae a soot but a grunt?—Proverb.
From a tear-off Calendar.

No reference to the meeting of the Reichstag is intended.

• • •
A critic pronounces the story of the British Parliament as being unsuitable material for a stage-play. Too many Acts probably.

• • •
"To the passenger the effect was rather like being hoisted quickly out of a well in a tilting bucket."—Article on an Autogiro flight, in "The Times." Readers who are accustomed to leave their wells in this way now know what it is like to Autogire.



• • •
A County Councillor declares that the old-time navvy will soon disappear. He will if he keeps on digging.

• • •
A London baker has won several cups in amateur weight-lifting contests. He puts it all down to his daily thirteen.

Snub for Hitler

"The most interesting event of this week has been the birth of a single young to a pair of Feline Douroucoulis in the Tortoise House."—*The Times*, Saturday, April 29th.

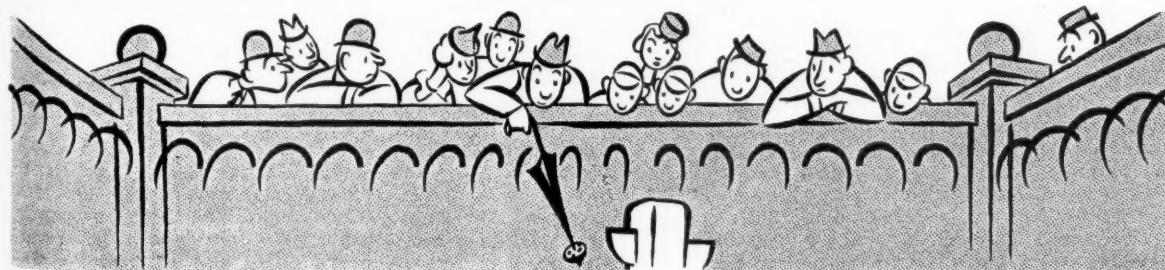
• • •
As a result of the higher horse-power tax a new class of motor-car automatically comes into being. It will be known as the Incu-Bus.

• • •
"ETON AND HARROW HAVE FEW OLD FLANNELS
BOWLERS ARE CHIEF NEED"

Daily Telegraph.

Parcels of old clothing, which will be gratefully acknowledged, should be addressed to the respective headmasters.

• • •
A writer says that the animals at the Zoo lead happy and luxurious lives. They don't have to walk round to view the exhibits.





"Just a shade wider, Charlie. I can't see 'im!"

The Situation is Saved

TWO new motor-cycles were delivered to our battalion last month, replacing two "unserviceable" ones. The transaction was a direct result of optimism—optimism displayed by Sergeant Spanner, the instructor, in assuming the previous week that Privates Muzzle and Pullthrough were fully competent to take their road-test.

Now the Army's mind works in a peculiar manner. Once your battalion has been formally issued with a motorcycle you can smash it up completely if you like, without being censured, as long as you indent for a new one in the proper fashion and have a reasonably plausible excuse—such as Privates Muzzle and Pullthrough. What you cannot do is lay a finger on the crate it comes in; for it belongs to Ordnance and might as well be constructed of solid gold. So when the Adjutant noticed Private Butt, a battalion cook, hovering round the newly-arrived crates with an innocent look on his face and a small chopper behind his back he at once gave orders that they were to be securely locked up in an empty hut. There they stayed for three spring weeks while he made

arrangements for their return—no doubt with a band and a guard of honour.

The great day came and a small fatigue party, under Sergeant Grenade, entered the hut, gave a "Together heave!" at the first crate—and came out again in an enormous hurry, the cause being a swarm of bees which, entering by the window, had just taken up new quarters in the crate. Sergeant Grenade, by the way, was observed to be occupying the post of danger in the rear; not, however, in the approved military tradition, but simply because he hadn't the same turn of speed as his men.

In a short while Lieutenant Swordfrog, the Orderly Officer—in response to an S.O.S.—drove up in his car. With him he brought the Barrack Officer. They ventured cautiously to the window and looked in. The bees were swarming in a bunch on the wall. "Ah, bees!" said Swordfrog and, turning to the Barrack Officer, added cleverly: "What are you going to do about 'em?"

There followed a long and interesting argument. Swordfrog maintained that bees on a War Department wall were

a barrack fixture and the Barrack Officer ought to remove them. The latter held that bees on a War Department wall were merely a dirty wall and the battalion ought to clean them off. At this Sergeant Grenade moved a cautious pace to the rear: he guessed who'd be detailed for the cleaning off. The Adjutant then came up—our Adjutant is never out of anything for long—and announced as usual that the whole thing was a "nice point." Since bees, he pointed out, could according to Regulations actually be officially kept in some stations, they should properly come under Ordnance. If, however, they had already made honey, it was definitely a supply question and the R.A.S.C. would have to deal with it. Should, on the other hand, the bees be traced to anybody, it was a case of live-stock trespassing on Government property and they could be impounded until replevied. Sergeant Grenade here took another step backward: he guessed who'd be detailed for the impounding.

Captain Bayonet, who had now come across from his office near-by, volunteered that a "swarm in May was worth a load of hay," and therefore

they were forage. Swordfrog quickly added that in that case they might be traded off for the benefit of the Adjutant's charger which, owing to excess of oats, was perhaps a little more mettlesome than . . . The Adjutant, who had had conspicuous trouble with "Bucephalus" on the last formal parade, here fixed Swordfrog with a steely eye and abruptly changed the subject. He asked had they all forgotten that the C.O. was coming round inspecting barracks with General Blind-Bloodberry. He added that all bees, honey and/or forage had better be got out of the way because it looked like being a stinker of an inspection anyway, it being the General's month for finding fault. He then stalked off, saying as a parting shot that he'd blame Swordfrog if the General were displeased at anything.

It was at that point that Private Barrel entered the story. One of the fatigue party, he had been passing the time by larking about at the back of the hut with Private Sling. During this he missed his balance and fell against the side of the hut. Now Private Barrel is no gossamer; when he falls against the side of a hut it is rather as though that hut had been charged by a Mk. II Light Tank, especially when it is hit by that part of Private Barrel which looks most like part of a Mk. II Light Tank. The walls shook and quivered, a splintering sound was heard at the point of impact, a pane of glass fell out of a window on the other side and the close-knit swarm of bees apparently burst outwards.

Within three seconds all that remained of the fatigue party was Private Barrel, who'd naturally been delayed, and even he was doing a steady twenty-two up the road in the wake of his commander. Bayonet was miraculously back in his office, peering through the window with the hastily assumed air of one who'd been working there all morning and had just that moment casually got up to see if it looked like rain. Swordfrog, apparently in a cloud of bees, was in his car, hastily winding up all the windows. He managed this with such speed that only three bees got in too. He then sat very still, hoping these three wouldn't notice him. The other bees began to range about vindictively.

Suddenly in response to gesticulations from Bayonet, he saw that further up the road the C.O., looking miserable, and General Blind-Bloodberry, looking for something to find fault about, were approaching in ignorance of their fate. Moreover, he

remembered what the Adjutant had said about holding him to blame.

So hurriedly slamming the car into gear he drove to them and started to explain by gestures. To his horror the bees, which were all round his car, came with him. For a moment his two superiors stood their ground: then they broke and ran in opposite directions. Swordfrog, still thinking of the battalion's fate, and his own, should the General get stung, followed him with the idea of getting him inside the car. Unfortunately the bees followed too—so thickly that Swordfrog could hardly see to drive and thus nearly ran the General down, till he got his windscreen-wiper going. Wherever the General led Swordfrog followed, and wherever he went the bees went too.

At last the General, wildly yelling and flapping his hands, reached his own car near the Orderly Room and went off home like a rocket, Swordfrog here abandoning pursuit.

THE battalion was saved from adverse report because the General hadn't begun to inspect. Moreover, he never came near us for three weeks, by which time it was his month for approving things. So Swordfrog had saved the situation—or rather the bees had by following him about. Just why wasn't at first apparent—till the three that were in his car got out through the roof ventilator and the swarm suddenly left for foreign parts. Then Swordfrog realised that one of those in with him had been the Queen! A. A.



"Well—promise you'll catch me if I jump."

Adventure in London

I MET a rhinoceros in Avenue Road yesterday. Later on I met many other fellow-creatures; but it is the rhinoceros that sticks most in my mind. Every twig of every tree was tipped with green; the banks of the Regent's Park Canal were a kind of fairyland; it was a morning of high spring, a morning that might well have tempted many a rash cricketer to take off his first two sweaters before a spell of fast bowling. Birds—in many cases—sang.

The rhinoceros was not walking. It was riding in a car and I was obliged to wait at the corner of the road until it had thundered past me. There is a great deal of this almost unconscious cruelty in Nature. The strong trample on the weak. Only a short while ago a giant panda attacked a pilot in the cockpit of an aeroplane. There is a tree outside the window of my flat which many botanists, including the third head-porter, believe to be a kind of evergreen oak, and in this tree a pair of pigeons and a pair of blackbirds are nesting again. Last year the he-pigeon walked a little way along one of the branches towards the blackbirds' nest, doubtless desiring *Lebensraum*. The he-blackbird attacked him fiercely, pecked him all round the eyes and drove him away. This warfare went on for weeks, and I have often watched the he-pigeon sitting on the lawn, his face covered with blood, waiting for an opportunity to return to his home, while the he-blackbird was engaged in torturing worms. It is not known to everyone that pigeons suckle their young on milk. I could also tell you some queer things about toads. But I am talking, if memory serves me rightly, about a rhinoceros.

The rhinoceros was not riding alone. There was a burly happy-looking man in the front part of the vehicle acting

as chauffeur, and another man in the rear part of the vehicle stroking the rhinoceros on the nose.

I caught this man's eye in passing and smiled at him. Struck at once by the idea that I supposed him to be doing something foolishly sentimental, he gave me what I think he would have called an old-fashioned look. Old-fashioned in the streets of London means rough, rude, unpleasant, or unkind. I once told the driver of a taxi-cab that the address I wanted was about a quarter of a mile further on. It turned out to be three-quarters of a mile. "That was an old-fashioned quarter of a mile," he said when we reached the house at last. He then told me much of the story of his life, while I fumbled for my fare. I find that the drivers of taxi-cabs and even the conductors of buses are very prone to tell me the stories of their lives—much more prone, I mean, than Civil Servants or even Cabinet Ministers, and I often wonder why this is. And I am reminded that a taxi-cab driver has just published a book of reminiscences; not a surprising thing, for there are few ways of life so full of mystery, danger and romance. Bus-conductors do not, I think, so lightly rush into print, though their lives are also full of excitement—especially, I think, on Route 53. I remember a man employed on this fine service telling me a long story about a Russian Princess—but I am straying again from our rhinoceros.

OUR rhinoceros—yours and mine—was standing in a sort of high wooden crate, and the man who stroked his nose was standing outside the crate on a float. The journey was being made, I have little doubt, in order to give the rhinoceros a breath of fresh air. "That rhinoceros," I imagine Mr. Julian Huxley saying, "looks peaked. It could do with an outing in the country. Take it down to Whipsnade for the day, but come back early, for these May evenings are always rather treacherous."

And I fell to thinking how strange are the doings and devices of civilised man, that this rhinoceros, once roaming innocently in the African jungle—once roaming innocently in the Indian forest—but I remembered not without a touch of sadness that now I should probably never know in what continent it had innocently roamed, if roamed indeed it ever had or innocent had ever been—that it should be captured with such infinite pains, be brought across so many leagues of water and land, be imprisoned so ruthlessly all its life behind so many stout bars, as though it were some criminal, and yet, when it seemed ailing, be sent off with so much tenderness and solicitude for a country holiday in the fresh green English woods, while there in Berchtesgaden—

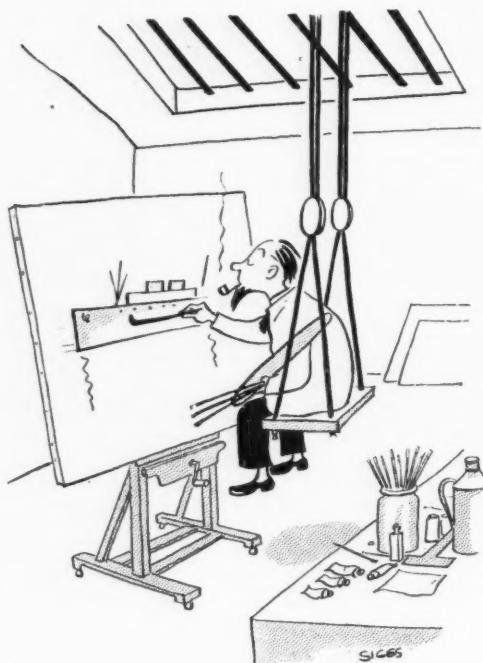
A tear fell from my eye, making a little splash on the pavement. So soon does a man descend from happiness to melancholy. Here was I, dashed suddenly from sunshine and the joyfulness of spring into brooding on all the sorrows of the world, when a moment before I might have been saying with Wordsworth:

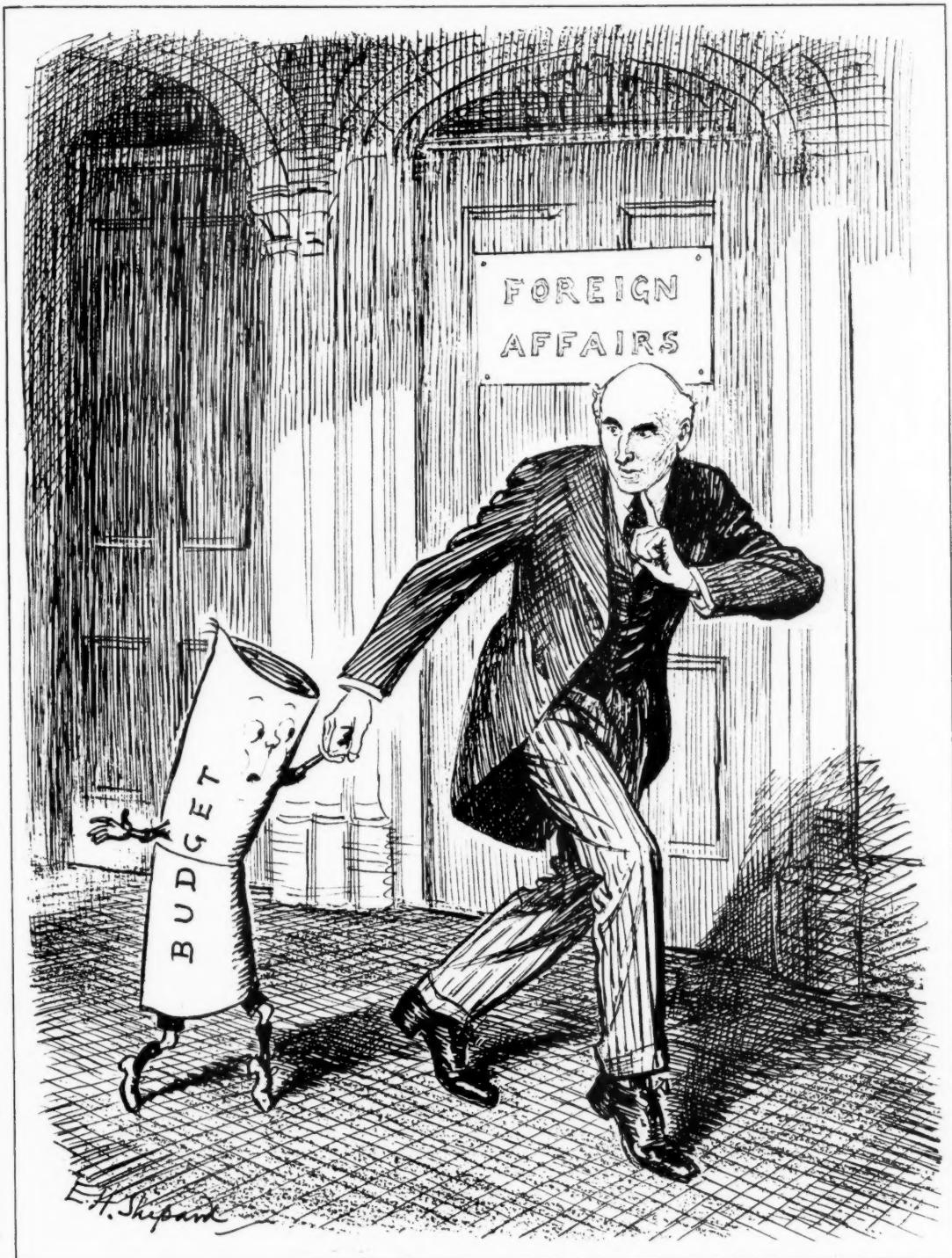
"And all my heart with pleasure glows
And smiles with the rhinoceros."

Not that it was really smiling. It had a large tuft of hay in its mouth, and no ruminant smiles readily when it is eating hay.

I crossed into Prince Albert Road exactly in time, as usual, to miss my bus.

EVOE.





EASY PASSAGE, 1939

Sir John Simon. "Come along, boy, nobody's bothering about us."



POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS—LIFE IN MAYFAIR

Civil Air Guard

IV.—More Drill

AS life is short and drill, like the other arts, somewhat long, our Chief Instructor decided after our first parade that he could no longer instruct us personally. He has therefore delegated the task to the Unit-Leaders, and this evening we are to be drilled by our Unit-Leader Widgeon.

Our Unit-Leader Widgeon is blond, handsome and the respected holder of an A Licence; but, although he has had a few days' intensive training, he is not yet very good at drill. Moreover he has at No. 5 in the front rank Air-Guard Owl, an experienced Air-Guard who remembers what drill used to be like in 1914. Unit-Leader Widgeon faces us with a pleasing diffidence and we return his regard with tolerant bonhomie. Under his mild direction we stand to attention, we dress by the right, we form fours and we form two-deep again. Although Air-Guard Owl is still clearly reserving his opinion Widgeon sees that no one is actually refusing to obey his commands. He grows increasingly confident and decides to try something more ambitious.

"Now," he says, "we'll try marching in fours to the right, halting, and turning left. And the thing to remember here is that when I give the command 'Left turn' you automatically form line."

But Air-Guard Owl now fixes upon Widgeon a beady and censorious eye.

"If you'll pardon me," he says with a fine disregard for the fact that he is standing at attention, "I think you're wrong there. As I remember drill, you do not form line until given a separate command."

This view is confirmed by Air-Guard Puffin, who claims to have studied drill in a book, but opposed by Air-Guard Partridge, who used to drill at school. Widgeon is bemused by this conflict of opinion.

"Well I thought I was right about that," he says uncertainly, "but if you like I'll go and ask one of the other Unit-Leaders. Oh," he adds as an afterthought, "you'd better stand at ease while I'm away."

It turns out, however, that the other Unit-Leaders are equally in the dark on this point, and after some further discussion Air-Guard Owl is over-ruled and it is decided that, to-day at any rate, we will form line. Accordingly we form fours, turn right and march rapidly in the direction of the aerodrome fence. Unit-Leader Widgeon follows, inviting us mildly to dress by the left, keep in step and swing our arms. So absorbed is he in this discipline that he fails to notice the proximity of the fence until he suddenly sees

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that we are on the point of marching through it. This emergency unbalances Widgeon. He is obliged to give the word "Halt!" with unstudied abruptness, as if he were applying the brakes to a car, and he gives it on the wrong foot. As a result we also become unbalanced. We cannot now remember whether we were to form line or to remain 'n fours, and when Widgeon gives the "Left turn" some of us form two-deep and some of us refrain.

While Widgeon is still contemplating this novel formation the Chief Instructor appears, followed reluctantly by a short muscular Air-Guard called Kestrel.

"Lord!" says the Chief Instructor, surveying us indulgently, "you *have* got yourselves into a jam! But I really came over here to suggest that you let Mr. Kestrel drill you for ten minutes. He's a professional P.T. Instructor, and I'm sure you'd all benefit enormously from his advice." He turns to Widgeon. "If you wouldn't mind?"

Widgeon does not mind. He rejoins the ranks with a sigh of relief and Kestrel faces us in his stead. By this time drill is beginning to pall and we regard Kestrel with apathy and scepticism while he, on his side, examines us with the impersonal interest of a potter looking over his clay. But it is soon evident that Kestrel is an expert in his business. His explanations are lucid and precise and his commands are given with an authority which strikes agreeably upon our ears. But unfortunately the drill which it is the vocation of Kestrel to impart is Swedish drill and differs in detail not only from the drill Air-Guard Owl was accustomed to in 1914 but even from that more recently expounded by our own Chief Instructor. As the instruction proceeds we grow restless and discouraged. We admit that Kestrel is an excellent instructor, but we would be more ready to profit from his advice if we did not suspect that the drill which he was so ably imparting was a kind of fancy drill repugnant to the austere military mind.

After the parade we discuss our drill in the bar and it is apparent that if we are discouraged Air-Guard Owl is outraged.

"Drill!" says Air-Guard Owl disgustedly, flooring a half-pint, "that wasn't drill—not *military* drill. Here we are," he continues, "hard-working chaps, most of us. We give up our evenings to learn drill and all they do is to waste our time with a lot of fancy work that no one outside a Fitness Campaign will ever need."

We heartily applaud the observations of Air-Guard Owl. Drinking our beer with gestures of contempt and revulsion we agree that our drill is rotten, our commanders inept, and the Airport Authorities much to blame. We grow heated and indignant and in the end we demand so unanimously that something should be done about it that the Airport Authorities decide to import a professional sergeant-major.

So eager still is man to forge his own chains.

For Garden-Lovers

ON May 10th the Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Institution celebrates its Hundredth Birthday. The object of the Institution is to assist, by Pensions and Grants, Gardeners, Market-Gardeners, Nurserymen, etc., and their widows, who are elderly or in distress; last year two hundred and fifty old or infirm persons were helped in this way. Funds are urgently required to maintain the Pension List, and Mr. Punch feels sure that many of his readers will wish to send the Institution a birthday present. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary, Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Institution, 92, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

Love on the Wheel

MY love is a lady cyclist, and I swore by my tingling bell I would follow my love to heaven or follow my love to hell.

I have kept my vow unbroken, though it's years and years ago

Since the Chipstead Wanderers Cycling Club met at the "Barley Mow."

Oh! blast on the tyre that punctured and the pump that tore my vest—

When I sweated up to the "Barley Mow" she had gone on with the rest.

So true to my vow I follow, cut from my kind and my like, Cursing the Chipstead Wanderers, cursing my wanton bike,

Clad in a bygone knicker and a lessening shred of shirt, Unshaven, hopeless and soapless I ride alone in my dirt.

And is this my ride eternal? Yes, by the powers above I shall wander the roads forever and never shall meet my love.

I shall wander the highways weeping, for her I shall never find;

If only I knew, beloved—are you in front or behind?

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Breathing Space

"It is expected that Colonel Beck will announce that Poland will not cede Danzig to Germany, or permit a German motor road through the Corridor. this week."—*Daily Sketch*.



"Have you anything for loss of voice?"

"Good evening, Sir; are you being attended to?"

General Ullage

Mr. Punch's Test Questions

Write down your answers in the space provided at the end of every question, and then see if you are right. If you are quite right give yourself ten marks in each case; if you are only vaguely right give yourself seven. If you are quite wrong but really you knew the right answer all the time, you can take five. If you are quite wrong but the question was unfair, take two. If you are just honestly and hopelessly erroneous take one for luck.

Then add up your total marks. If you score 340 you are a jolly good chap. If you score more than 165 but less than 273 you have red hair. If you have more than 89 you should make a good mother. If you have less than 31 it doesn't really matter; but don't tell your fiancé(e).

(1) Who is (a) the President of the Board of Trade, (b) the King's Remembrancer, (c) the Ruler of the Pilots, (d) the Member for South Walthamstow, (e) the Master of the Rolls, (f) Hitler?

(2) What are (a) brass tacks, (b) tenter-hooks, (c) half-seas over, (d) brass rags, (e) short commons, (f) long hops?

(3) How do you make (a) a bowline, (b) a book, (c) a *gaffe*, (d) a *moue*, (e) a *mot*, (f) money, (g) love?

(4) Who is (a) the Treasury Solicitor, (b) His Majesty's Procurator-General, (c) the King's Proctor?

(5) What is the French for:
(a) "We are exploring every avenue"

- (b) "We are straining every nerve"
- (c) "We shall leave no stone unturned"
- (d) "We are focussing the issues"?

(6) Where is (a) Runcorn, (b) Russia, (c) Red Biddy, (d) Lord Runciman?

(7) Do you get up when you are called?

(8) "Contango" is (a) a face-cream, (b) a Spanish General, (c) a parlour-game, (d) a Latin verb, (e) a ballet-dancer, (f) a City tavern?

(9) Set down briefly in your own words the plot of (a) *Hamlet*, (b) *Ivanhoe*, (c) *As You Like It*, (d) *Martin Chuzzlewit*, (e) *War and Peace*, (f) *Pride and Prejudice*, (g) *The Merry Widow*, (h) The Licensing Act, 1910-1921.

(10) (a) Why do M.P.'s bow towards the Chair when the Speaker is in it?, (b) Why does the Speaker bow towards the Chair when he is not in it?

(11) What is the average rate of progress of (a) a Derby winner, (b) the winner of the Boat Race, (c) an omnibus in the Strand, (d) a car in the London Parks, (e) a swallow, (f) a snail, (g) a glacier, (h) the *Queen Mary*, (i) H.M.S. *Hood*, (j) the Government?

(12) What is the difference between the Lord Chamberlain and the Lord Great Chamberlain?

(13) Where is your (a) passport, (b)

appendix, (c) sense of decency, (d) respirator?

(14) Say in a few words what is meant by "sterling."

(15) Have you the faintest idea why you use the following expressions: (a) akimbo, (b) amuck, (c) *sine qua non*, (d) a moot point, (e) kick the bucket, (f) So long! (g) by and large, (h) aftermath, (i) the 6th inst.?

(16) How would you treat a blister caused by (a) mustard-gas, (b) Lewisite, (c) rowing?

(17) Where can you lawfully buy a beer before breakfast?

(18) What river flows into the Thames (a) under Blackfriars Bridge, (b) at Wandsworth, (c) at Putney, (d) near Cannon Street Station?

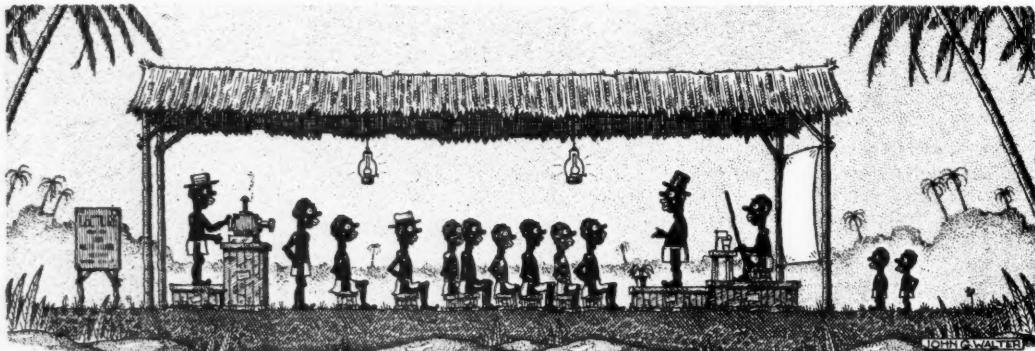
(19) While you are in your gas-proof basement what will you do about an incendiary bomb in the attic?

(20) What is the average age of the Kensington Licensing Justices?

(21) Who designed (a) Greenwich Hospital, (b) the Tate Gallery, (c) Somerset House, (d) the Custom House, (e) Lord Castlerosse?

(22) What is the latest hour at which you can lawfully be married?

(23) What is the origin of the term (a) All Souls, (b) All Hallows, (c) All Saints, (d) All Fools?



"I NOW HAVE GREAT PLEASURE IN INTRODUCING MR. N'GUMBI-N'GOMBI, THE EMINENT EXPLORER, WHO WILL RECOUNT HIS EXPERIENCES AMONGST THE NATIVES OF WILDEST YORKSHIRE."

(24) Have you ever met a girl called Taffeta, Tapioca, Fidelity, Punctuality, Sago, October, Dahlia, Tulip, Fuchsia, Cedar, Phosgene, or Belisha? And why not?

(25) In your opinion should there be a tax on (a) bicycles, (b) betting, (c) walking, (d) women?

(26) Which would you rather have: (a) a peerage, (b) £10,000 a year, (c) a Cabinet job, (d) a ticket to New York, (e) a slap in the belly with a wet fish?

(27) Who did away with (and why): (a) the tax on soap, (b) the three years' average, (c) the bona-fide traveller?

(28) Strabolgi is the name of (a) a Greek statesman, (b) a secret society, (c) a volcano, (d) a violin?

(29) What rhymes with Caius, ague, silver, beetle, Beaulieu?

(30) Can you ever find the lease of your house?

(31) Are you annoyed if people go off with your wife?

(32) What is (a) the Consolidated Fund, (b) the solstice, (c) the Lincoln, (d) the time?

(33) Quite honestly, don't you think that everything is pretty unsatisfactory?

(34) Are you overdrawn?

A. P. H.

• •

Pictures Without Tears

MY aunt came in on Sunday at about six.

"Well, you never came," she said.

"No, it cleared up at three," I said, "and you said the Wallace Collection was a place for a wet Sunday afternoon."

"It was raining when we went in."

"What was it like?" I asked.

"Lovely, of course. We met the Sharpes."

"Oh! Who are they?"

"Mrs. Sharpe has had an operation and she'd never seen the 'Laughing Cavalier.'"

"Gracious!" I exclaimed. "What a risk! Couldn't it have been put off?"

"No, it was an appendix. They whipped it out in no time," she said.

"And now she's seen the picture too? Did she like it?"

"Of course," said my aunt—"everybody does."



"Uncle George too?"

"Your uncle is very fond of good pictures. To-day he said that somebody had once wondered whether the Cavalier was laughing at all."

"Poor Mrs. Sharpe!" I commented.

"What did she think of that?"

"Well, I don't think she knows a great deal about pictures really."

"Then I think it was her own fault for going," I said. "Whatever made her go—apart from the rain?"

"Well, my dear boy," said my aunt, "everybody has to begin some time. Even you," she added pointedly.

I got up.

"What would you say," I asked, "if I told you that I had been to the Louvre—in a thunderstorm too?"

"You?" she cried.

"Yes, I," I said modestly. "It was just before I had my appendix out."

"What!"

"And just before they whipped out the 'Mona Lisa.' They both came out about the same time."

My Uncle George came in.

"George," cried my aunt, "did you know this boy had his appendix out?"

"No," he said; "then he ought to have met Mrs. Sharpe instead of me. I was no good to her."

"And," she went on, "he's done the Louvre!"

"Good work," he said. "What did you think of the 'Mona Lisa'?"

"I thought she was smiling at us," I said.

"I shouldn't wonder," he growled. "What time's supper?"

Pages From My Life

The Truth About a Centenarian

THE village of King's Evil lies deep and secluded on a bare forest-covered hill-top in the West Country. It is an unassuming place, a mere cluster of houses with an ancient church, the scanty ruins of a Crustacean Abbey, and a public-house called "The Philatelists' Arms." There are no roads to the village. Modern progress has passed it by. To the motorist it is unknown; to the cyclist it is inconceivable. From the air it appears a mere speck; to an observer on the moon it would be totally invisible. Yet it was here that one of the most terrible events of my life took place.

It is only a few years now since I settled in the village, thinking it an ideal place in which to spend my declining years. I was receiving a monthly pittance from a man who had rather imprudently tried to blackmail me some years before, and with that, helped out by a little fretwork, I just contrived at times to exist. Naturally enough I was on the look-out for any possible ways of augmenting my income. But when the opportunity occurred it was in a most unexpected quarter.

If ever there was a publican who strove to embody the popular idea of "Merrie England" it was Jack Boomwright, landlord of "The Philatelists' Arms." He was a great bull of a man, standing six foot four in his stocking feet and five foot ten in his boots, with a bellowing laugh, and a handshake like an elephant's. All day he might be seen standing in the doorway of his picturesque half-timbered hostelry, endeavouring with many a merry jest and sometimes with curses and threats of force to induce the public to enter. No portlier landlord ever watered a tankard of ale or won his customers' money by means of a magnetised pin-table. He had a hearty word for everybody, and many people had an even heartier word for him.

As can be imagined, there was no more popular inn in the district than "The Philatelists' Arms." Yet there was one thing lacking—there was no centenarian in King's Evil. No bearded ancient sat outside the inn door muttering fragments of proverbial wisdom and being interviewed by the daily papers. The thing rankled with Jack Boomwright. He had even gone so far as to employ a man called Silas Gummert to act the part. But as Gummert was only thirty-five he carried small conviction, and Boomwright had taken the first opportunity of dismissing him. But he still set his heart on a centenarian and, as I was soon to learn, he was a man who would stick at nothing to gain his ends. I had not been in King's Evil long before I saw him eyeing my white beard with a curious expression.

SOON he began to throw out hints. One day, for instance, he seized me by the beard and tried to drag me through the inn door. He only desisted when I knocked him unconscious. He resolved on more direct methods. Late one night he came to my humble cottage, a low ancient structure which had once, I believe, been a tobacco kiosk. The doorway, I remember, was too small to admit the burly publican, and so in his cheery way he knocked down one of the walls and stepped inside. He came straight to the point. In a low voice he promised me three shillings a year and commission if I would act as Gummert's successor.

He awaited my answer, his fingers drumming impatiently on the ceiling. He had the expression of a man who is not to be thwarted, and I knew his reputation. Queer tales

were told of what happened to those who crossed Jack Boomwright's path. It was even said that he had once made a face at the Vicar as he passed on his way to Sunday morning service. I hesitated. Every fibre of my being cried out against this monstrous deception. I a centenarian? It was still six weeks to my seventy-ninth birthday. And yet . . . Let poverty be my excuse. I knew that the extra three shillings a year would make all the difference to me between abject want and a certain degree of luxury. I was tempted and fell. That night Jack Boomwright returned to "The Philatelists' Arms" with a human soul in his keeping.

Next day I took up my duties. They were simple enough. All I had to do was to sit outside the inn, muttering and occasionally cupping my hand behind my ear, with a tankard of beer beside me. Boomwright had even simplified matters by providing an artificial tankard with cardboard froth on top. Yet I was not happy. As I sat there under the admiring glances of the passers-by I longed each moment to get up and expose the truth.

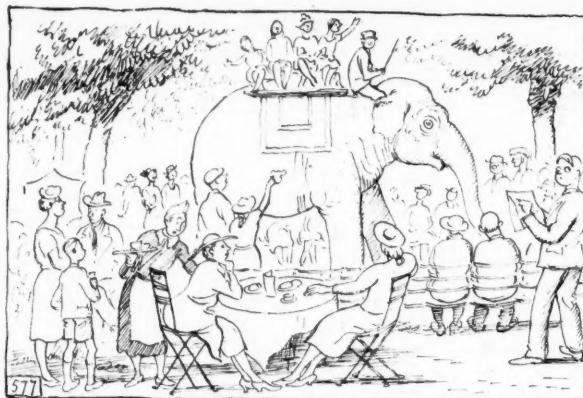
There was another thing that worried me. Silas Gummert was still in King's Evil, and I knew that he had sworn to take his revenge on Boomwright for his dismissal. Practically every day he walked past the inn, eyeing me in a way that boded no good. I wondered fearfully if he had discovered my secret.

BUT at last the great day came, the day of which every centenarian dreams. A newspaper-man was coming to King's Evil to interview me. When the news was known the village was in a fever of excitement. On the morning of the day I was awakened by the King's Evil Euphonium Band playing the prelude to "Parsifal" outside my window, and they were still playing it when at three o'clock in the afternoon I took my usual seat outside "The Philatelists' Arms" amid the cheers of the whole population. No expense had been spared to make it a day of festivity. There was even an old second-hand Uruguayan flag hanging upside-down outside the post-office. Yet for all that I was ill-at-ease. And never has a premonition of mine been more justified by the event.

At the very moment when the newspaper-man stepped forward to put the customary question: "To what do you attribute your long life?" and I made ready to answer, under Boomwright's watchful eye: "To drinking beer, wines and spirits supplied (on or off the premises) by 'The Philatelists' Arms'"—at that very moment there was a commotion among the crowd. Mr. Blower, the postman, was pressing forward with a postcard in his hand.

"It's for you!" he shouted to me. Then he read out in a loud voice, "Heartiest congratulations on your seventy-ninth birthday.—Yours, A Well-wisher."

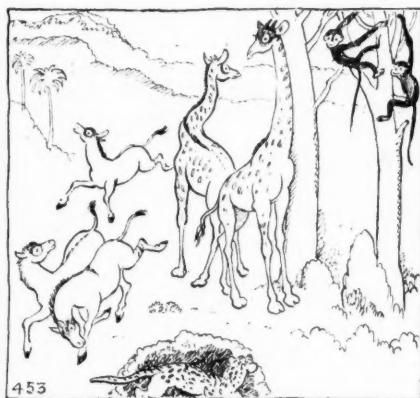
There was dead silence. I looked at Boomwright. He had gone as white as a sheet, though in an effort to brazen the thing out he had turned up his coat-collar and pulled his hat down over his eyes. The enemy who had done this thing was not far to seek. Among the crowd I had a glimpse of Silas Gummert, smiling triumphantly. Then, as the newspaper-man disengaged himself from the advancing mob and got his camera ready to take the first photographs of the King's Evil Riots, I decided that it was time to execute a long-deferred project: to retire from the world and write my autobiography.



ROTTEN ROW: SIR WALTER GILBEY'S NIGHTMARE



"I HAVE THE STRANGEST FEELING THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE."



"IS THAT THE POSTMAN COMING UP THE DRIVE?"

NOTES
ON THE
R. A.



"YOU MUSTN'T EAT PASTRIES HERE, SIR!"

MINISTER FOR GOLF,
WITH PORTFOLIO

"WHERE IS THAT NEEDLE?"



"IT MAY BE COOKED AND USED IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY AS A TURNIP."



FITNESS CAMPAIGN



FURTHER PROTESTS—



AGAINST THE POLICY—



OF ENCIRCLEMENT



"Now don't you wish you hadn't swallowed that bishop?"

A Sea Boon

NEPTUNE, god of the ocean, hark to my humble song,
Now while my lordly liner buoyantly lifts along,
Now while the rest are sea-sick—landlubbers all the
lot!—

Hear the praise of a passenger who—touching wood!—is not.

Thank you first for your lively mood, whatever the limp
ones say.

I can thrill to the pageantry of the sea's superb display—
Ridge after toppling ridge, unchecked the mighty rollers
sweep,
Foam-flecked green on their sun-bright crests, blue in their
valleys deep.

Thank you next for the ship's high heave and the roll
vertiginous,
Leaving me with no quake or qualm, lifting my lyric thus,
Thrilled to think how the bolder bloods whose swagger I
envied so
Lie with basins about their bunks, knowing that I must
know!

Thanks for the ample deck-space left, for the nooks that
no one shares;
Thanks for the peace from fun and games and the first
free choice of chairs;
Thanks for my reckless appetite while the fiddled table reels;
Thanks for the staggering stewards' awe of the man who
has missed no meals!

Ah, and a grateful verse I owe for a boon beyond all these,
Due to the heave and plunge of the deck on your jocund
giant seas—
Locked in his cabin, scared to speak, in a grimmer jester's
grip,
Lies now, faint and yellowy-green, the Life and Soul of
the Ship!

W. K. H.

Report of the General Purposes Committee

(NOTE.—This is merely an essay in a comparatively little-used literary form, and has no bearing on any Situation. Put your brains back in the scabbard.)

1st May, 1939.

Present :

Alderman Gupp, J.P. (Chairman)
The Deputy-Mayor, Alderman Sir H. J. Stoopid, J.P.
(Vice-Chairman)

The Mayor (Alderman Poof, J.P.), Alderman Clump, Councillors Ake, Axe, Bloat, Denkleby, Gooze, Streakover, Thoop, J.P., Urp, J.P., and Whatfeathers; Town Clerk, Treasurer and Surveyor.

1. The Committee recommend—

That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on the 1st May, 1939, be taken as read, that the Report be received, and that paragraph 2 of the Report be approved and adopted, or else.

2. GENERAL MATTERS:

(a) Housing Matters

(i.) 113, Scooble Road, Kippers on Door.—The Committee submit the following report of the Borough Surveyor, viz.:—

I have examined No. 113, Scooble Road, alleged to be a public nuisance because kippers are constantly nailed to the front door, and I find that fish of some kind, possibly kippers, are constantly nailed to the front door. The house is the residence of the organiser of the local Fascist party.

The Committee recommend—

That steps should be taken at No. 113, Scooble Road, to prevent the constant nailing of kippers to the front door.

[Addendum by Mr. Councillor Gooze:—or the back door.]

(ii.) Theft of Telephone Kiosk.—The Committee have considered the recent theft of the telephone kiosk from opposite the Town Hall and what they consider it is a scandal. With regard to the allegation that there never was such a kiosk there, the Committee recommend—

That this should be treated with the contempt it deserves.

The Town Clerk has been instructed to search for that photograph there was once that showed it as plain as plain.

(b) Use of Council Chamber

The local Fascist party has been granted permission to make use of the Council Chamber on Thursday evenings. Permission to use the Council Chamber on Thursday evenings has also been granted by the Committee to the local Gasworks Boys' and Stevedores' Marline-spike Darts Club. The Committee recommend—

That the services of an extra charwoman should be enlisted for cleaning up the Council Chamber on Friday mornings.



(c) *Portrait of Council*

In connection with the portrait of the Council in session, now being painted by Mr. A. Gumble, the Committee wish to state that Mr. Gumble may be very clever but they don't like it. The Committee have instructed the Town Clerk to point out to Mr. Gumble that the table round which the Council sits is of mahogany, not dark oak, that the legs of the table are all of the same length, and that the shadows on the face of Mr. Councillor Thoop have never been green at recent sessions of the Council. The Committee also submit the following report of the Borough Surveyor, viz.:-

I have now examined the corner of the Council Chamber shown in the picture and I find that as the unevenness and cracks shown do not exist in reality there is no need for renovation.

The Committee recommend—

That Mr. Gumble alter his picture in accordance with the facts, by means of a tracing from the architect's design.

(d) *Heating of Old School, Bullseye*

Correspondence passed on by the Education Committee concerning the heating of the Old School, Bullseye, has been considered by the Committee. They recommend—

That no grant for extra coke to heat the Old School, Bullseye, is justified until all the cinders on the cinder-track have been used at least once more.

(e) *Legal Proceedings*

The Committee submit the following report of the Town Clerk, viz.:-

Legal proceedings were taken before the Justices on the 13th April, 1939, against three persons for calling out, "This means war!" from the Public Gallery of the Council Chamber on three occasions, viz.: when it was announced that five street lamps had been left burning all night on 29th-30th March, 1939; when it was announced that seven street lamps had failed to light on the night of 28th-29th March, 1939; and when Mr. Councillor Whatfeathers grazed his shin with the minute-book. The Justices declared that proceedings should not have been taken.

(f) *Complaints by Sir I. Moore, Bart.*

Many complaints having been received from Sir Ilkla Moore, Bart., that local people and particularly members of the Council seize every opportunity to use his name in such sentences as "This is just such a place as I so often see Sir Ilkla Moore, Bart., at," the Committee have instructed the Town Clerk to write to Sir Ilkla Moore, Bart., saying that they do not see what they can do about it, although they regret the disadvantage this places Sir Ilkla Moore, Bart., at.

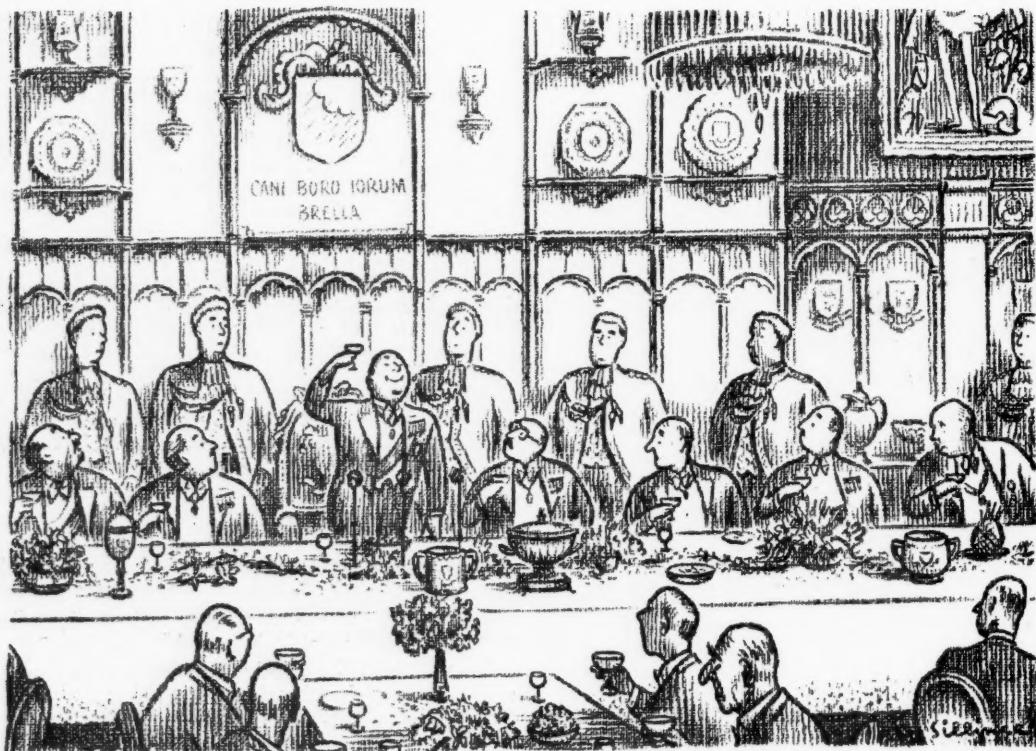
(g) *Numbering of Odge Road*

In view of complaints received that the premises known as No. 2, Odge Road, are situated between the premises known as No. 37, Odge Road, and the premises known as No. 39, Odge Road, the Committee recommend—

That the said No. 2, Odge Road, should be renumbered as No. 38, Odge Road, unless this number is already in use on the other side of Odge Road, in which event God save us all.

R. M.





"Well—here's mud in your eye!"

Labels

PEOPLE'S gardens such as Mabel's Are now riotous with labels, Proving that the plant-life there Does not take her unaware But is blooming by intent In the shades that Mabel meant; And that in each vacant spot Shoots will very soon have shot And will bloom if they are able As directed on the label. (Careful gardeners will refrain From spring-bedding here again. Experts will not dib this bit And put parsnips into it.) Labels also tend to spare Mabel lavishing her care And her training as a nurse On a patch of shepherd's purse, Or regaling startled hens With *begonia pendulens*, Thinking from its early petal It was only stinging-nettle.

Labels help the ignorant To discriminate each plant, Since, with nothing but the trouble To themselves of bending double, They may learn the proper Latin For the cactus that they sat in—

Not that they will oft concur To which plant the names refer Or that they will understand Mabel's weather-beaten hand.

People's gardens such as mine Often otherwise incline. Scarcely ever do my labels Signify the same as Mabel's. Owing to the dreadful drought And the frightful frost about, Owing to the beastly wet And the ghastly wind we get, All my labels now convey Where my plants have passed away;

Often do they indicate Where a lupin lies in state, Where a saxifrage has sagged Or fritillaries have flagged, Where a bud that failed to stay Only saw the blight of day. Hardy annuals in hosts Here have given up their ghosts; Columbine and London Pride Have committed suicide; Pinks have petered and passed on, Buddleias have been and gone; Snowdrops too have fallen fast, Lithospermum breathed its last, Stocks have tottered, phlox has cracked, All my thyme has been attacked. Monuments rise up beside Frilly scillas that have died; Wooden tombs erected bear Names of bodies buried there. There they have been laid to rest With no flowers by request.



THE POLE STAR AND THE BEAR

May

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Impressions of Parliament

Synopsis of the Week

Monday, May 1st.—Lords: Debate on Export Credits.

Commons: Budget debated.

**"AN ANGLO-SAXON ATTITUDE"?**

"I am old-fashioned enough to stand by Munich, and I trust that the Prime Minister will lose no opportunity of returning to that attitude."—*Lord HARMSWORTH*.

Tuesday, May 2nd.—Lords: Motion for Broader Basis of Government.

Commons: Budget debated.

Wednesday, May 3rd.—Lords: Their Majesties wished God-speed. Debate on Road Accidents.

Commons: Their Majesties wished God-speed. Budget debated. Camps Bill given Third Reading.

Monday, May 1st.—While nobody is silly enough to wish to encircle Germany, it is no use giving military guarantees to countries whose independence is threatened by her unless they are also given generous economic help in peace-time. This was the gist of Lord SEMPILL's motion with which the Peers pretty well agreed. He urged that the Balkan countries, which were clearly the German economic objective, were rich in natural resources but short of foreign exchange, and that the best way to help them was by much bigger export credits than the sums the Government had proposed. Lord TEMPLEMORE, who replied, was unable to say very much, the British Mission being still in the Balkans, but he admitted that it would not surprise Whitehall if the £10,000,000 lately put aside for export credits proved too little.

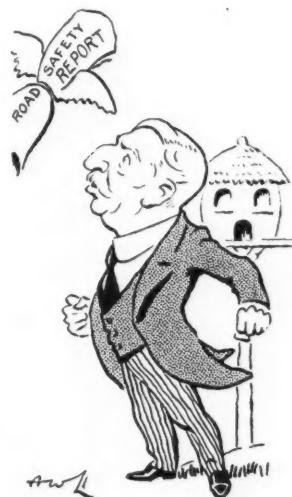
The sort of thing which Members murmur to each other behind their Order-papers is an insuperable obstacle to the planting of amplifiers about the Commons, which is not surprising. Mr. ELLIS SMITH was told that the idea had been considered and turned down. A much better one is that Parliamentary candidates should be obliged to pass an elementary test in elocution, such as reciting a portion of the *Koran* to a committee of pneumatic-rivettters.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN is still against a compulsory register; but Mr. DALTON, whose Party have suddenly whisked the Capital Levy out of the limbo of academic Socialism, dusted it and set it up again a little fearfully on their platform, declared that a cash-register was what was wanted, which would assist in the resolute soaking of the rich. He was assured by Mr. H. G. WILLIAMS, however, who is an unrepentant cynic where Labour indignation is concerned, that little would be heard of the levy when elections came.

Sir ADRIAN BAILLIE put up what sounded an unanswerable case for kinder treatment for the colour-film industry, and Mr. DUNN thought he had unearthed another Budget leakage because huge quantities of tobacco have been bowling into Nottingham. The CHANCELLOR, promising to consider Sir ADRIAN's case, assured Mr. DUNN that the tobacco trade had done nothing unusual.

Tuesday, May 2nd.—Lord DAVIES asked this afternoon that in the present emergency all sections of opinion should be represented on the Front Benches, but so weakened his claim to be non-partisan by launching into a terrific attack on the Government that he

made a present of an effective reply to Lord ZETLAND, who had been unkind enough to take down the exact times at which Lord DAVIES had strayed back for a few seconds to the terms of



Lord NEWTON (to the Report of the Select Committee on Prevention of Road Accidents): "SHOO! NO PIGEON-HOLE FOR YOU!"

his motion. In Lord HARMSWORTH the P.M. found a champion for his past.

Mr. Stanley, in the Commons, made it quite clear that, while he had no powers to prevent British ships being sold abroad, he had done his best to discourage the recent sales to Germany. He also told the House that he would shortly introduce legislation to reserve to the Government the first offer.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, pressed by Members opposite, declined to say anything definite about the Anglo-Russian negotiations while these were yet incomplete, but he declared that there was no lack of good-will on the part of the Government. The SPEAKER then informed Mr. A. P. HERBERT that he had been wrong in imagining that the Clerk of the Parliaments had slighted the faithful Commons by not bowing to them the other day when they had gone to the Lords to hear the Royal Assent given to some Acts (the point being that the Clerk bows not to the Peers but to the Lords Commissioners); and after Mr. HERBERT had apologised handsomely all round, the House settled down to a confessional meeting at which Members admitted to smoking appalling quantities of suicidal tobacco. The Labour Party, as was

**MR. DALTON UNEARTHES AN OLD BONE.**

"The Labour Party went to the polls in 1922 on the issue of a capital levy, and it was significant that all talk of it had been dropped until the last few days."—*Mr. H. G. WILLIAMS* on Mr. DALTON's proposed Capital Levy.



"What do you do to keep moths away?"

"Well, I used to sprinkle turpentine on newspapers, but nowadays I find that the paper alone is enough."

expected of them, made much of the bearing of the new tobacco and sugar duties on the poor, but Captain CROOKSHANK, already admirably at home at the Treasury, reminded them that the indirect taxpayer was relatively better off than he had been during the depression years.

More forceful were the complaints that news-reels, documentary films, and film societies were going to be fatally hit, and the CHANCELLOR promised to see what he could do for them.

Wednesday, May 3rd.—In the warmest terms both Houses wished THEIR MAJESTIES the best of good luck on their trip to Canada, the United States and Newfoundland. Humble Addresses are to be presented.

The Lords had a good debate on road accidents and were not entirely satisfied from Lord DE LA WARR's reply that the Alness Report, of which they strongly approved, was not in danger of being shelved except for its easier recommendations. Both Lord

NEWTON, who opened the debate, and Lord ALNESS himself urged that cyclists should be obliged to use rear-lights; and Lord ALNESS declared that speed could not be counted the major factor in accidents, since these had decreased when the old twenty-mile-an-hour speed-limit was removed. Most speakers agreed that propaganda was the chief hope, but Lord PONSONBY, who said he had been a pedestrian for about sixty-six years, went further and demanded that the Ministry of Transport should no longer be a political office.

In the Commons Mr. CHAMBERLAIN told Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON that he would certainly be ready to exchange reciprocal assurances with Germany, for the charge that Germany was being encircled was absolutely untrue; and during a long series of questions on foreign affairs Commander FLETCHER drew attention to the harshness of the Treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest, apparently forgotten by Herr HITLER, by which Germany

took a quarter of Russia's territory and 62,000,000 of her population, and reserved to herself the whole economic resources of Rumania. Versailles may have been imprudent, but beside these treaties it becomes a picnic.

A new scheme by which the Government propose to increase plough-land by at least 250,000 acres was announced by the MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. £2 per acre is to be paid to farmers who will plough up grass-land of seven or more years' standing and clean it with a suitable crop. The Minister seemed satisfied that adequate plans for the control and supply of farming in war had been made.

The Camps Bill, of which all Parties approve strongly, was given a Third Reading. Mr. Punch gave it his blessing a long time ago.

• •
 "FRICTION IN THE AXIS"
 "Evening Standard" Poster.

So that's why HITLER wants that oil!

If Us Women Believe All We Read

No woman need be lacking in glamour to-day.

I am very glad about this because for rather more than a quarter of a century I've thought I was a bit lacking in glamour—and quite a lot of other people have seemed to think the same—about me, I mean, not about themselves.

However, that's all over now.

I wake up in the morning, reader, and what do I do?

Turn round, moan quietly, and reach for the powder-puff?

Wrong.

I drink orange-juice, get into my one-piece no-top half-hitch swim-suit cut on slenderising lines, and do my exercises for forty-five minutes from my gay, check, cretonne-covered mattress on the tiled floor of my sun-porch, my loggia, or my off-cream and eau-de-nil bath-room, as fancy dictates.

Then, all in a glow, I settle down to doing my face.

Lip-stick alters the shape of my mouth, eye-shadow makes my eyes look quite different, facial-massage changes every contour, and cream, powder and rouge complete the process of rendering me wholly unrecognisable to my nearest and dearest. (Not that it matters, they'll have left home long ago.)

And now my hair.

Shall it be rolled off the forehead, rolled in the nape of the neck, rolled off the dressing-table altogether? Shall it be all waves like Deanna Durbin, or all straight like Garbo, or all ends like it was yesterday and most of the other days before that?

Or shall I just scrape it all up and up and up till it's glamorously gathered on the top of my head and I'm an Edwardian?

(Not for the first time either, because I was an Edwardian once before—after being a Victorian and before turning into a Georgian. But never mind that now. Glamour is glamour and that's what we're dealing with at the moment.)

Now, slipping on my youthifying peach-pink girdle, my seamless silk stockings and my Hollywood rompsuit, cut on the new Shirley Temple play-lines, I go down to my sun-parlour and drink orange-juice.

(Oh, girls, girls, isn't it all *fun*! Life begins at fifty-eight.)

My foam-bath takes up most of the morning, but there's time for

a cigarette before changing into my *trottoir*-suit and one of those new, amusing, off-the-head hats with the on-the-face and yet off-the-nose veil. Then a good girlish gossip over green salad and orange-juice, and perhaps a film in the afternoon.

From six to seven I have nothing to do but relax.

Eye-pads, a chin-strap, a mud-pack, a camphor-mask, my bed and my orange-juice will help me here.

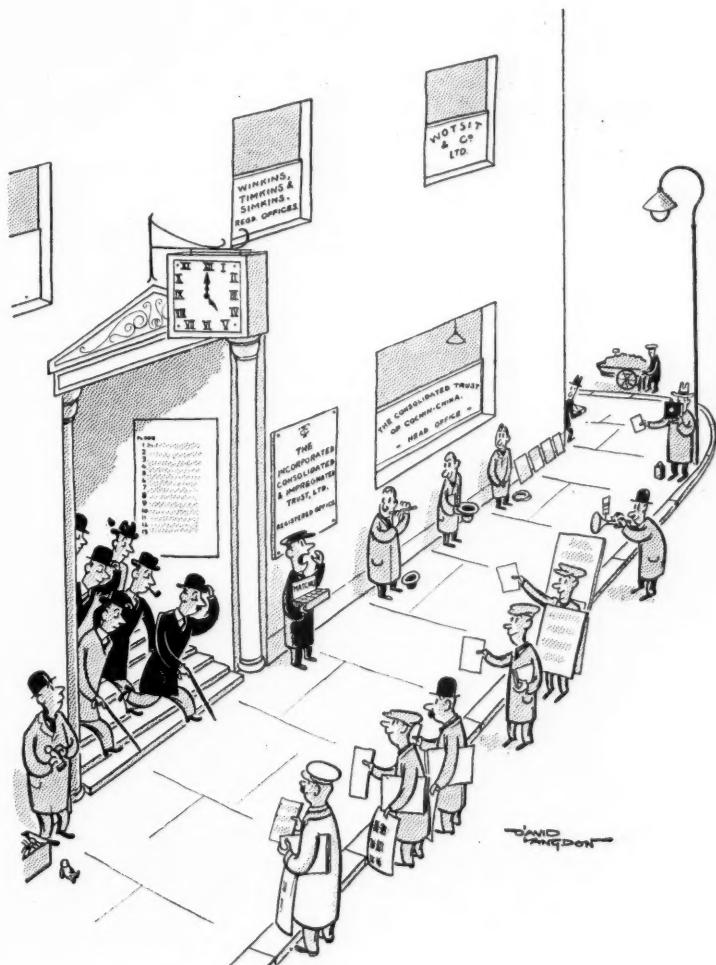
The day really starts after throwing on one of those easy-to-wear too terribly youthful little dinner-dance-and-supper affairs, with perhaps a wreath of the new fruit-jewellery and half-a-dozen wide matching bracelets, and running glamorously down the stairs and into my waiting car. I

mustn't forget to call for my *débutantes* grand-daughters either. It's half the fun doing things together, isn't it?

The rest of the night is one long display of glamour, with my partners fighting amongst themselves as to which of them is to take me home in the dawn after beer, kippers and bacon on the roof.

* * * * *

And now, reader, I will go and speak to the cook about the bath-water, and the state of the kitchen last night, and the cottage-pie for lunch; and I will also count the laundry, write to the butcher, ring up the plumber, wash some handkerchiefs and see if I can make any of my last year's summer clothes do for this year. E. M. D.



"O.K., fellers, 'ere they come!"

At the Play

"THE WOMEN" (LYRIC)

"Cupid? That double-crossing little squirt?" This is, as it were, the theme-phrase of this brazen-and-amusing comedy which has held New York in thrall for longer than can be comfortably remembered. A woman wrote the play, Miss CLARE BOOTHE, and forty women unsupported by a single male put its twelve scenes across with a hard brittle precision which is almost frightening.

While it is not quite true to say that in spite of its cast it is entirely about men, it is very nearly so, for men whom we only see in the mirror of these women dominate every aspect of their lives. They are not at all nice men, nor are their women shown to any great advantage. At least for the purposes of comedy Miss BOOTHE takes a lowish view, in all senses, of humanity, and where she doesn't see it tough she sees it dumb and dull.

Her characters, on their own admission, have the methods and outlook of alley-cats. They have only, as Mr. LINKLATER once said so concisely, two thoughts in their heads, and one is hats. In the pursuit of the male they know no restraints, no mercy, no common loyalty and none of that attractive quality which used to be called modesty. They are primitive fighting creatures permanently cleared for action, with minds and faces unassailably made up and with a purr which is only a transparent shield for malice. That so entrancing a bunch is represented by Miss BOOTHE as being a cross-section of New York Society did not, as I say, deter New York from flocking to the play, and her implication that all Societies are the same is unlikely to pique London into staying away from the Lyric. So far as I could judge from one audience, the Lyric will be full for some time.

The central story shows how the happy marriage of *Mary Haines*, a decent ordinary woman, is ruthlessly broken up

by the diabolical gossip of her friends, and how, after she has divorced her husband, she gets him back by unexpectedly adopting the tactics which have been used against her. When it is brutally forced on her that her

and against all her natural judgment she goes to Reno. It is only when she realises that Stephen is as miserable as she that she shows the sudden fight which gets him back.

It is an obvious weakness in a play which gains much of its effect from an outrageous cynicism thrown off at speed that it should have for heroine its least amusing character. This is no reflection on Miss KAREN PETERSON, who took the part well; but after the machine-gun wisecracks of her sisters *Mary's* scenes sagged, with the exception of that at Reno, in which she and a hard lady debated marriage. It is not a play which can afford to be gentle; and so the scenes between *Mary* and her small daughter (who was also well taken) failed, though they made the fair point that children are the chief sufferers from divorce.

Miss BOOTHE's dialogue is uneven, but whenever you are thinking it too snappy to be funny it comes back with some swinging lines which take

your breath away. They do this partly because they are witty—I will only quote the remark of a woman who was trying to stop her husband drinking: "I'm doing a reconstruction job that makes Boulder Dam look like an egg-cup"—and partly because they sail so near the wind

as to keep the sails of decorum wildly astir. Please let there be no mistake about that. I want no letters from the chalybeate spas accusing me of failing in my duty as a signpost to the narrow way.

The play has small shape and no elegance, but it is funny, sometimes very funny, and Miss BOOTHE has the invaluable gift of establishing a character in a few strokes and keeping it intact.

Miss MARY ALICE COLLINS, Miss EMILY ROSS, Miss EFFIE AFTON, Miss DEIRDRE DOYLE, Miss DOREEN LANG and Miss CATHARINE DOUCET take the honours. The latter's sketch of a high-spirited and feckless old lady is brilliant, and so is Miss LANG's commentary, as the housemaid, on the drama above-stairs.

ERIC.



"FOAM-KEEPING YOUTH HAVE EVER FOAMY WITS"
Shakespeare (nearly)

Sylvia MISS MARY ALICE COLLINS
Crystal Allen MISS CLAIRE CARLETON

husband has set up a baby-faced blonde in an apartment, her mother, a very seasoned old lady, counsels a moratorium during which Stephen will assuredly tire of the blonde and return a better and more affectionate man; but *Mary* has pride, the calculated tittle-tattle of her circle frenzies her,



THE KITCHEN COMMITTEE

Maggie. MISS NATALIE LYNN
Jane. MISS DOREEN LANG

"THIRD PARTY RISK"
(ST. MARTIN'S)

I AM always pleased when I see police-sergeants and detective-inspectors in a programme, for then I know that something is going to happen. It is not that I expect that the policemen in question will be anything out of the way. I expect them, indeed, to be stereotyped. Although the stage Irishman and the stage nobleman have long since vanished, there are other fixed types, and chief among them the village constable, ponderous and good-natured, and the detective-inspectors, who hunt in pairs, the one considerably older than the other. The presence of the police is so comforting and reassuring because then we know that some of the other characters are going to turn out to be interesting bad hats.

We particularly need this reassurance in the First Act of *Third Party Risk*, for *Sir David Lavering*, the young but eminent neurologist, has a very ordinary and not very jolly home life, with a difficult conventional wife and parents-in-law whose periodical visits the dramatists show very clearly to be dreary and drawn-out affairs. We find it difficult to believe there is going to be very much to interest us in this physician. The wife's restless suspicions are not very exciting, and the flirtation with a patient, *Ann Mordaunt* (Miss NORA SWINBURNE), is a foolish rather than a deeply discreditable business. But, by contrast with the weak First Act, there comes a Second Act of great and sustained excitement.

In no time *Sir David* finds himself faced with professional and domestic ruin, and *Ann Mordaunt* is in almost as grave a predicament. Motoring together to her cottage in Kent they run over a tramp, bring him into the cottage and find to their horror that he is dead. Not only is he dead, but the village is agog. An escaped convict from Maidstone has come and betrayed Maidstone's reputation for the highest class of convict. A peculiarly horrible murder has been committed in the village. First thoughts about dumping the body out in the road and saying nothing to anybody have to be drastically revised. Such is the neat predicament the dramatists

contrive, in an Act in which the thrills follow each other rapidly, without any excessive straining of the probabilities.

Mr. JOHN WYSE, playing *Sir David*, and Miss NORA SWINBURNE at last get into their stride. They are stimu-

RONALD SHINER) proves to be a wary cove, a born snooper with a large prying nose, quick to scent tension and trouble. He adds at once to the richness of the situation and the light relief of the action, for it is horrid work that faces *Sir David Lavering*, a physician and no surgeon, with a body to dispose of.

I will not go into the details of what he contrives, but it may be imagined that it miscarries, and in the last Act, when we are back in Harley Street, the fat is very nearly in the fire. With difficulty do we listen to Miss GILLIAN SCAIFE's portrayal of *Sir David's* mother-in-law being very tiresome, though it is a most convincing and amusing portrayal, and Mr. WALDO WRIGHT seconds it as a realistic ineffective old father-in-law. We are sure that more is going to be heard from the cottage in Kent, and we know from our programmes that the police are due.

We have already seen the bucolic sergeant, *Wilkins*. In that part Mr. DONALD FERGUSSON exudes a rather wordy good nature, but I do not know where he got the idea that the essence of village constabulary life is to hold the belt and walk with the legs well in front of the rest of the body. The two detectives, smooth and acute, have a great many questions to ask, and it must be admitted that the play ends on rather a note of anti-climax when they prove much too easy to satisfy. We are left with the feeling that if this is really the standard, if *rigor mortis* can pass unnoticed, murder does not always speak with a distinct voice, or the Force is hard of hearing.

His wife (Miss IVY DES VOEUX), like her parents, remains too much on the outskirts of the action. They never know what is happening, and it is not really necessary for the evening that we should see as much of them as we do. *Syd*, who has been so well drawn and acted in the Second Act, is made less credible in the Third. But these blemishes are easily carried because the main situation, warning us that police publicity so easily accompanies road-accidents and that accidents may accompany the most carefully planned illicit jaunt, is well worked out and makes a really exciting evening.

D. W.



UNPROFESSIONAL INTEREST

Ann Mordaunt Miss NORA SWINBURNE
Sir David Lavering, M.D., F.R.C.P. Mr. JOHN WYSE

lated and much more at home in this Act than they were in the uncomfortable preliminaries. To add to their difficulties the hikers, *Syd* and *Lil*, appear seeking shelter, and *Syd* (Mr.



HIKERS OF THE STORM

Lil Miss GILLIAN ADAMS
Syd Mr. RONALD SHINER

Old Crock

YOU don't often see these old cars nowadays, and I naturally regarded this one with some interest as it drew up thunderingly by the kerb. The driver got out and, noticing me, smiled. I returned the smile. As I got close to the car I saw the driver's lips move, but he was too close to the engine for me to hear the words, so I nodded and smiled again.

He pointed to the driver's seat and

said something which I took as a request to sit in it. He nodded approval. His lips moved again and I caught the word "brake." It was on the outside of the car and he was holding it; he pointed to it and gave it into my hand. With his hand on the side of his mouth he shouted, "D'you mind?" and with my hand similarly placed I replied, "No, but why not stop the engine?" He shook his head vigorously.



"Any job, Sab. I'd be a Captin or even a Chieef Engineeah."

I was not in a position to see what he was doing, for he had crossed to the other side of the car and disappeared beneath it. But I noticed he had a thick piece of string in his hand.

He was out of sight for some minutes and I held on patiently. The seat seemed to be very warm, and I was not sorry when the driver reappeared. He had used nearly all the string, and I wondered what had come loose. "Thanks," he shouted, seizing the brake-handle and motioning me out of the way. He vaulted neatly over the side into the seat, still holding the brake. I stepped out on to the pavement, as this was the only seat in front.

"Can I take you anywhere?" he asked.

"Where are you going?"

"Nowhere in particular."

"Then I'll go anywhere," I said.

"Right. Jump in—in the back, you know."

I went round and found a little door. Stepping over the number-plate, I chose a bucket-seat immediately behind him.

"Ready?" he roared, turning his head slightly.

"Ready!" I screamed in reply.

"Off we go then."

He let go the brake, and I expected we would begin to move. But although the engine was noisier than ever there was a hitch somewhere and we only slid back about a yard. With the brake again in his hand, he leapt nimbly into the road and asked for my assistance once more. I jumped down beside him and shouted, "Can't you fix the brake?"

"Not just now—another time," he replied.

"But must one hold the brake for ever? I asked testily.

"Yes," was all I heard, for he was busy removing the driver's seat. Flinging this into the back of the car, he lifted up the floor-boards, disclosing what I took to be the gear-box. It was smoking hot.

He looked up at me and said, "We shall have to stop." I reminded him we hadn't yet started, but he did not hear me, and shortly afterwards the engine coughed its way to silence.

"What's the trouble?" I asked, looking over the side.

"These gears are not what they were," he said.

"What were they?"

"You see," he went on, ignoring my question, "there are three teeth missing on 'first,' and it was just bad luck that they were in the position they were."

"Look here," I said, "what about this brake? Shall I let it go?"

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I cannot think I was unreasonable, but from the manner in which he took the starting-handle and pushed it through the spokes of the front wheel it was obvious he thought so. "You can now," he said, and returned to the gear-box.

I asked him if I could help in any way. "I know something about engines," I said. He smiled indulgently.

He regarded the smoking gear-box for a moment or so and then asked, "How old d'you think she is?"

"I've no idea."

"It's paid death duties three times. What d'you think of that?"

I looked at him and it occurred to me that it might possibly pay once more, but I didn't say so.

"My grandfather made it," he went on, "and it has figured in every will since."

"Really?" I said. He seemed to be quite serious.

"And what's more, it's a racer. London-Brighton you know. Old crocks. Of course it isn't what it was."

"What was it?" I asked, trying to humour him.

"I remember the first time I drove it," he mused. "I think I'll always remember it. I was only seven, and father and grandfather were in the back. . . . But I was forgetting. Of course. That gear will be engaged now. We've gone back a bit, you know. If we race her up the gears will jump that gap on 'first' and we shall have no more trouble. Get in, will you?"

"Pardon me—did you say seven?"

"I expect so—it's usually seven." But his mind was now on other things. "Oh, do you mind?—the starting-handle, you know. Or shall I?"

I pulled the handle up sharply and just got my arm away in time. I hurried to him and shouted that the handle had stuck in. "Good!" he said. "Jump in." I hesitated but decided to risk it.

I took out my cigarette case, and it was unfortunate that he let in the clutch at that moment. I never saw the case again.

No sooner was he in "top" than he turned to me and said, "I was telling you about my father and grandfather. They were both in the back when it happened."

"When what happened?" I asked anxiously.

"The back came off. And—would you believe it?—I never heard them go. One moment they were there and the next they weren't. I can't remember anything quite so sudden as that, can you?"

* * * * *

I can now. I know how his father and grandfather left the car and came to rest. And how they suffered.

○ ○

Goering as Gift?

"Crowds gathered outside the Chancellery yesterday to watch the birthday present arriving. It swelled to large proportions in the afternoon, when the Fuehrer unexpectedly returned from Austria."

Indian Paper.

Civic Statues

IT seems quite likely that the natives of Milo never paid much attention to their civic statues in the days of their prime, and if they noticed the one of Venus at all they probably assumed vaguely that it represented the Lady Mayoress of some previous generation. That, at any rate, is the position in Gampford. We too are the fortunate possessors of many art treasures in the form of civic statues, and it is pleasant to reflect that when the archaeologists of the twenty-fifth century start to excavate the ruins of our city these statues may be appreciated at their true worth. No doubt art-lovers from all over the world will make a pilgrimage to the magnificent museum which will have been erected on the site and will gaze with awe and wonder on the marble effigy of Alderman Thomson, twice Lord Mayor of Gampford in the nineteenth century; and we hope that the guide will particularly draw their attention to the way that the unresponsive stone has been cut into soft and billowing curves to suggest a frock-coat tight almost to bursting. But in the meantime this chunk of art is passed daily without a glance by Gampford's teeming thousands. And it is the same with the statues of Henry Minton, M.P. for Gampford in the nineteenth century, Lord Samson,

the nineteenth-century iron-founder, William Percy Smith, the Gampford novelist, and a score or more of others who brood unnoticed like guardian angels over the city of Gampford.

But there are occasions when the most purblind citizen is compelled to observe our civic statues. The city fathers of the past were not content to rely on the beauty of the statues alone to draw the eye of the passer-by; they gave them a further claim to the passer-by's attention by planting them plumb in the middle of all the main thoroughfares of the city. And though as *objets d'art* our statues may not be enjoying the success which was expected for them, as obstacles they achieve from time to time sensational results.

SHOULD you turn down into Bank Street, Gladstone is there to block your path. Dodge back into Commercial Road and Sir Robert Peel is crouched like a Rugby full-back about to tackle. Swing inadvertently into Orion Place and the stone plinth of Alderman Thomson is ready to put a spoke, or rather about twenty tons of solid masonry, in your wheel. Overtake a tram in Market Street and Richard Coeur de Lion is waiting for you with sword drawn in the middle of the road. Stop your car opposite the public

library and the roar of indignant klaxons behind you will draw your attention to the fact that you and Henry Minton, M.P., are forming an impenetrable barrier across half the road. In fact round every corner famous figures of the past are lurking to make their mute but by no means ineffective protest against the age of mechanisation.

And so it not infrequently happens that a citizen of Gampford, driving along with his mind a happy blank, is suddenly brought back to realities by a resounding crash as his wheels make contact with a marble alderman. And whenever this happens more than two or three times in a month the city is split by controversy the like of which has not been known since the passing of the Reform Bill. For a week or more everyone suddenly becomes aware that these large slabs of masonry in the middle of our streets are not due to an act of God or some vast upheaval of nature, but that they have been placed there deliberately by the hand of man, and that what man has done man can undo.

It is intolerable, say some, that one should be unable to move a yard about the streets of Gampford without tripping over the great unwieldy form of some fossilised alderman, some petrified Premier. In life no pedestrian, were he Henry Minton, M.P., himself, would be allowed to hang about indefinitely in the middle of the road obstructing the traffic; why, then, should he be allowed to do so in death? And what, anyway, is the point of these great lumps of stone? The originals of them may have been fine men and worthy citizens, but their best friends never claimed that they were ornaments to any landscape. And consider also the effect on the younger generation of Gampford. Is any young man likely to devote himself to the public service if as his ultimate reward a stone effigy of himself is liable to be held up to the abuse and ridicule of countless thousands as yet unborn? In brief it is high time that all this stoneware were taken down and either broken up to serve the useful if humble function of mending the roads, or, if it must be preserved, re-erected in the parks where it can obstruct nothing but an occasional perambulator.

AND whether these views are expressed in the City Council-chamber, the public houses or the columns of the local Press, they always evoke the fierce opposition of those who consider that any tampering with the face of Gampford is nothing short of sacrilege. So—they say more in sorrow than in anger—there are citizens so lacking in respect for their own, their native



"No—let's see yours first."



"You have been listening to a series of Lullabies by Borodin."

town that they are prepared ruthlessly to tear down its best-known landmarks. Men of Gampford, returning after twenty years of service to the Empire in a foreign clime, have testified that the tears stood in their eyes as they gazed once more upon the dear old statue of Henry Minton, M.P. And now this is to go, is it? And why? Because motorists have found that they damage their cars more when they hit stone figures than when they hit live ones. Because certain people think that our statues are not beautiful. Well, if every sample of the human form which lacks beauty has to be isolated in the parks, there is no need to start with the statues. They do at least compare favourably in appearance with most of the present members of the City Council.

And so the controversy has raged intermittently for years. Municipal elections are regularly fought out on the issue, and though the statues themselves remain unheeded, the statue controversy has become politics and, as such, a subject on which every

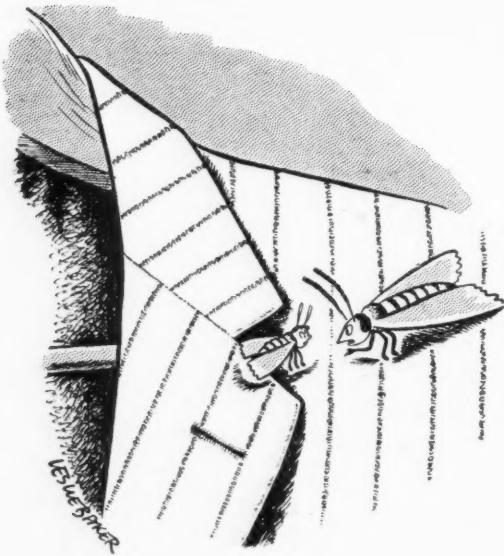
elector holds pronounced and unalterable views. Occasionally a statue is trundled out to the park to the accompaniment of resounding cheers from the bystanders, and invariably it is trundled back again the following year to the accompaniment of equally resounding cheers.

And now at last a Solomon has come to judgment in the person of the present Lord Mayor of Gampford—a motorist of thirty years' standing, who is reputed at one time or another to have hit every important statue within the city boundaries. He alone has been able to find a formula which satisfies all parties. In the present grave times, he has told us, we must consider the safety of our priceless heritage from the past. Populations can be evacuated, buildings on which bombs have fallen can be rebuilt; but not all the wealth in the kingdom could replace the statue of Henry Minton, M.P., or that of Alderman Thomson, twice Lord Mayor of Gampford, should the unthinkable happen and they be destroyed by bombs.

And so, very shortly, enthusiastic crowds all over the city will be watching workmen take down our statues for storage in the cellars of the Art Gallery until all danger is past. And as it is inconceivable that anyone will remember the statues after they have been absent for six months, they are likely to be there for a fairly long time.

BUT we like to picture to ourselves the delighted astonishment of those archaeologists of the future when, digging without much hope into the foundations of the Art Gallery, they come suddenly upon the serried marble ranks of Alderman Thomson, Henry Minton, Gladstone, William Percy Smith and all the rest of them. "Ah!" they will say to themselves, "the twentieth century in Gampford must indeed have been the Golden Age of art!" And perhaps they will write a long and learned volume expatiating on those happy days when art was a real and vital force in the lives of the people.

H. W. M.



"No ermine till you've eaten up your nice worsted."

Our Booking-Office (By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Indolent Isthmus

MEXICO, so her rulers declare, is to be freed through the completion of her glorious revolution equally and for ever from Spanish conquest, priestly dominance and capitalist control, so that she may progress to her rightful place in the ranks of modern nations. The difficulty in this excellent programme is the hopelessly unmodern character of the average Mexican, who, being to so great an extent of Indian or mixed blood and handicapped by having to exchange ideas in fifty-one different languages, shows a deplorable tendency to let the public utilities provided by British engineers dissolve in rust and sand while he slips gently back to the elemental tribal customs prevalent before the advent of the Aztecs. Mr. R. H. K. MARETT has lived and worked for seven years in this fascinating country while making archaeological research his recreation and incidentally falling in love. He has found the mountain temple of Rain-God Tlaloc at 15,000 feet above sea-level, and has been held up by brigands on a modern motor-road. He has lost his money like a man in a gold-mine, has superintended the exodus of Europeans from an "expropriated" oil-field, and danced a jig with an Indian witch at a Saturday night *fiesta*. In *An Eye-Witness of Mexico* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 8/6) he surveys a vast country's resources and prospects and comments on the prevalent political honesty without ever becoming prejudiced or even statistical.

Maternal Exhortations of Maria Theresa

An Empress who found time to correspond in affectionate detail with such of the surviving ten of her sixteen children as happened to be out of earshot, MARIA THERESA has at

last found a keen editor in Herr G. PUSCH and an apt translator in Miss EILEEN TAYLOR. The average reader of *Letters of an Empress* (MASSIE, 6/6) will naturally glance first at the maternal strictures to MARIE ANTOINETTE, who has been commonly censured for lending a too partial ear to Austrian admonition. We find her reproved for reposing inadequate confidence in her mother's ambassador and exhibiting less than enthusiasm for her German attendants —being urged, too, to be more polite to the DUBARRY, to avoid exercise that might endanger a Dauphin and to take more pains in cleaning her teeth! CAROLINE, at Naples, is advised not to let her husband feel her superiority. FERDINAND, at Milan, is exhorted to eat more fruit. But JOSEPH, as heir-presumptive, comes in for such grave themes as the Partition of Poland; and there is an almost topical ring about his mother's assertion that it is difficult in these matters "to adopt the Prussian attitude and yet . . . preserve the appearance of honesty."

School for Scoundrels

An observer in the seventeenth century noted that needy persons committed to gaol frequently perished there before being brought to trial. Forty years ago a boy of eleven was sent to hard labour for throwing mortar at a door. Even within the last few weeks a lad of fourteen suffered sentence of a month's imprisonment. While a new Criminal Justice Bill is under the Parliamentary hammer Mr. J. A. F. WATSON, of the National Association of Prison Visitors, reviews the history of our penal system in *Meet the Prisoner* (CAPE, 8/6) and pleads powerfully and well for further commonsense efforts to make the punishment fit not the crime but the criminal, in order that a maximum proportion of prisoners may be educated into being decent citizens. Here is striking evidence of the response of prison inmates to such innovations as payment for the work they do or the privilege of attending classes in English literature. The payment, to be sure, is very small and the classes limited to very few hours in the week, but the gain in self-respect and widening of outlook is beyond all proportion. Mr. WATSON's book, very moving in its human values, is important as an independent estimate of a burdensome problem and may have the incidental effect of drawing not a few recruits into the ranks of prison visitors.

The Chinese Himalaya

The province of Yunnan has provided our gardens with many of their choicest shrubs and the spring colours are generally reported to be unrivalled. Mr. GERALD REITLINGER missed most of this display by making his



"My Cook makes a delicious tomato soup."

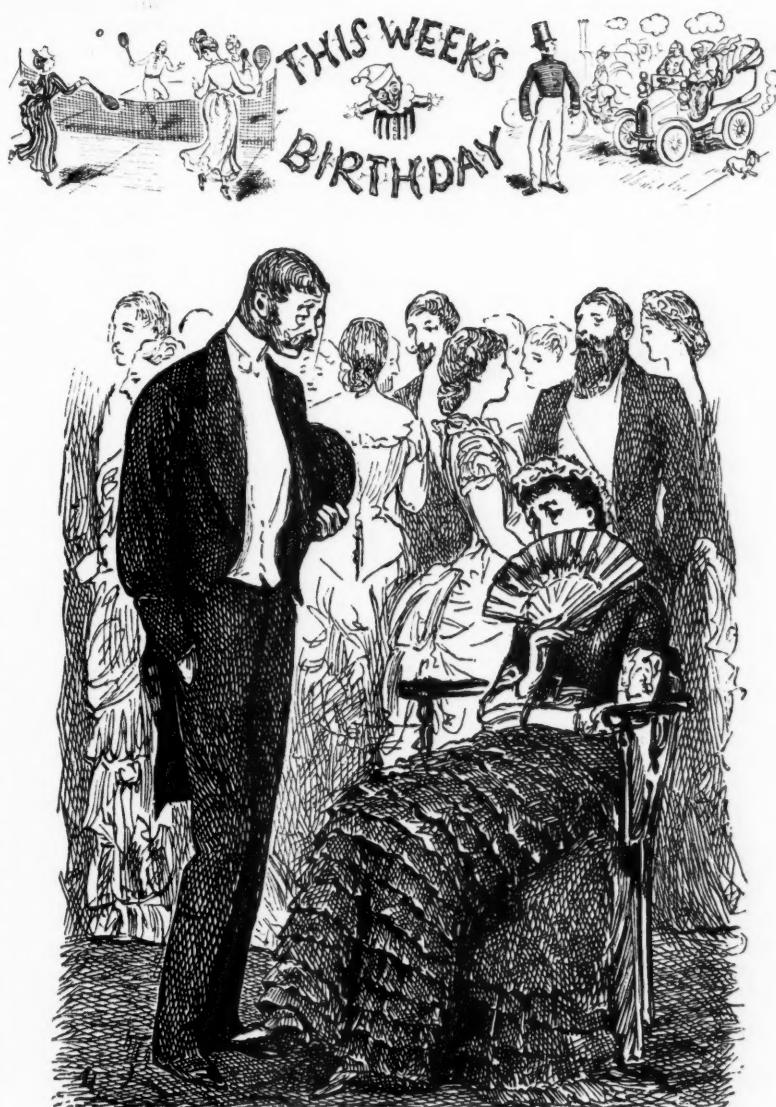
journey in winter. Still, his book *South of the Clouds* (FABER, 15/-) shows that he was copiously entertained in other ways. He travelled from Yunnanfu by way of the Yangtse Gorge to Burma and enjoyed every bit of it. He is a light-hearted philosopher and finds fun at every corner of the road. If anything he is a trifle too cheerful. But now and then, a little to the reader's relief, he offers some serious observations indicative of insight and wisdom. The descriptions are very thorough and the narrative is maintained at an easy level. In the end one aches to start for Yunnan to-morrow, for there "the most urban of civilisations has penetrated and made its terms with the mountains, without disharmony as at Darjeeling or complacency as in Switzerland."

Crime with a Difference

If many a novel has been based on an historic crime, the novelist's own pedigree can rarely have boasted a protagonist in the tragedy. Miss RACHEL FIELD, however, is great-niece of a woman who, some ninety years ago, was deeply if guiltlessly involved in that sensational murder of the Duchesse de PRASLIN which not only shocked the world but helped to give the *coup de grâce* to the tottering dynasty of Orléans. In *All This, and Heaven Too* (COLLINS, 8/6), aided by a paucity of facts and a strong imagination, Miss FIELD has reconstructed the character and adventures of HENRIETTE DESPORTES, or DELUZY, presenting her as a woman of charm and intelligence and persuading us that it was natural if not inevitable that her presence in the ducal household should have eventuated as it did. And to this persuasion Miss FIELD's firm and delicate portraiture of the Duke, the Duchess and the children who became so much more devoted to their governess than to their unbalanced and frantically jealous mother equally contributes. But the murder is not the end of the story. HENRIETTE, starting fresh in America, became the wife of a literary clergyman and passed the rest of her days among excitements no more violent than her brother-in-law's laying of the Transatlantic cable. If, however, the second part of Miss FIELD's book is less thrilling than the first, it coheres with it by virtue of the consistency with which HENRIETTE's character is developed and matured; and, admirably written, it holds one's attention to the end.

A Plot in London

It is recorded that one of the GEORGES, informed that the Royal Parks were an irresistible temptation to acquisitive flower-lovers, replied, "What? Do my people



LE MONDE OÙ L'ON S'ENNUIE

"WHAT! YAWNING ALREADY, LADY VEREKERS! WHY, IT'S ONLY MONDAY!"

George Du Maurier, May 13th, 1882

like flowers? Then plant some more!"—a regal if impracticable note of the fact that the Londoner prefers flowers of his own to the most grandiose public display. He had them of course under the Romans; Holborn was producing strawberries when the Temple bore its bi-coloured roses; and even THOMAS CROMWELL, who stole a considerable number of his neighbours' gardens, had to leave a few outlying plots for other Post-Reformation enthusiasts. EVELYN just missed making London a garden city after the Great Fire; and gardening flourished—with CARLYLE's copper beech and THACKERAY's shaggy lawn behind Kensington High Street—till the age of flats began

tragically to close on *London Gardens of the Past* (LANE, 6/-). Seeing, however, that the All-London Garden Championships still attract 6,500 competitors, there is no cause to despair; and perhaps Miss HELEN G. NUSSEY, who is Hon. Organiser of the London Gardens Society, will follow up her captivating survey of old times by an equally well-informed account of present feats and future enterprises.

The Line of Romanov

H.I.H. Grand Duke CYRIL of Russia was one of the few survivors picked up out of the water when the battleship *Petropavlovsk* struck a Japanese mine outside Port Arthur in 1904. This sailor-cousin of NICHOLAS II., loyal subject, true lover, invincible dreamer, who became by right of kinship the legitimist claimant to the Russian throne, passed long and peaceful and uneventful years after the great overthrow in planning to return as Tsar. He had no ambitions towards absolutism or revenge, but counted on his loving subjects recalling him to a constitutional monarchy. In a volume of memoirs left unfinished but completed by his son—*My Life in Russia's Service—Then and Now* (SELWYN AND BLOUNT, 15/-)—the late Grand Duke is hardly ever dramatic or passionate and not even always quite historically accurate. Intimate and trifling personal details are presented as solemnly as affairs of state—the misery of facing a board of naval examiners, for instance, or the satisfaction in a dance or motor-run being recalled in much the same level and unimpressive tones as the most spectacular moments of active service or Red catastrophe. In the result the writer appears as one endowed with human affection and personal charm rather than with resolution of a calibre to recover a throne.

Sea Raider

Mr. ROY ALEXANDER was wireless-operator of the cargo steamer *Wairuna* at the time of her capture by a German commerce raider off the Kermades in 1917. In *The Cruise of the Raider "Wolf"* (JONATHAN CAPE, 8/6) he gives an account of his experiences as one of several hundred prisoners stowed in the vessel's hold. The deliberate brutality which was a feature of so many German prisoner-camps on land seems to have been refreshingly absent on board the raider. On the other hand, the sufferings of the *Wolf's* involuntary passengers were certainly not mitigated by any excess of humanity, and the conditions in the crowded hold were at times comparable to those in the Black Hole of Calcutta. Scurvy, too, raged among the prisoners, every scrap of fresh food taken from the prizes being rigorously reserved for the crew. In this respect, as in others, Mr. ALEXANDER cannot be accused of writing

with any strong anti-German bias. He appears for some reason to have been more or less a privileged person, and his praises of the *Wolf's* captain are enthusiastic to extravagance. Captain NERGER's skill and courage no one would wish to deny, but to describe him as "one of the greatest seamen the world has ever known" is yet another example of those facile superlatives in vogue at the present time.

1509 - 1939

Messrs. BLACKIE's series of English Public Schools grows steadily, and Mr. C. M. PICCIOTTO's *St. Paul's* (5/-) is a welcome and interesting addition to the list. A comprehensive history of the school was written some thirty years ago by Sir MICHAEL McDONNELL, so Mr. PICCIOTTO, while acknowledging his debt to Sir MICHAEL's book, wisely pays especial attention to the more recent developments of St. Paul's. But his account of F. W. WALKER's headmastership, which was called by "not unsympathetic" critics a kind of benevolent despotism, is remarkably illuminating, and the tributes paid to Dr. HILLARD and Mr. JOHN BELL, who in turn became High Master, are both well considered and thoroughly deserved. In fact this is an excellent little book which will appeal not only to Old Paulines but to all of us who in these difficult days are anxiously watching the fortunes of our great schools.



Envy, Hatred and Murder

When you find that a hot-headed youth, who was generally believed to be drowned, returned home to discover his fiancée married to another (and nasty) man, you will agree that there is ample material for *Mystery at Hidden Harbour* (THE BODLEY HEAD, 7/6). Taking a small island as the scene of a thrilling drama, CORTLAND FITZSIMMONS has placed upon it a number of Americans whose social status is not too easy to assess. Apart, however, from this minor difficulty, there is no impediment to prevent anyone from enjoying a thoroughly well-organised guessing competition. An epidemic of confessions added to the difficulties of two women-detectives who were determined to prevent innocent people from acting as substitutes for the guilty.

Mr. Punch on Tour

AT Lancaster, from May 19th to June 8th, the Exhibition of the Original Work of Modern *Punch* Artists will be on view at the Public Art Gallery. The Exhibition will be shown later at Burnley and Mansfield.

Invitations to visit the Exhibition at any of these places will be gladly sent to readers if they apply to the Secretary, *Punch* Office, 10, Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

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